POLITICS

Human relations panel says 'no' to Amendment 2

Council view isn't sought on controversial measure

By **D'Arcy Fallon**
Gazette Telegraph

The Colorado Springs Human Relations Commission took a stand Thursday against Amendment 2, ending months of deliberation, research and spirited debate.

Unlike its policy on other human rights issues — such as the Ku Klux Klan rally last year — the commission pointedly is not asking the City Council to join it in opposing the controversial amendment to the Colorado Constitution, which would ban laws extending civil rights protection based on sexual orientation.

"Some of it is the previous political climate," conceded commission president Andi Leopoldus. "It's within recent memory that we forced the City Council into a position (with the Klan) that they clearly weren't prepared to make."

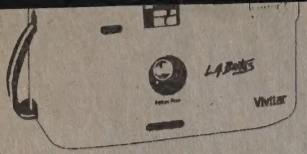
Although the Boulder, Westminster and Aurora city councils have spoken out against Amendment 2, the commission is taking a hands-off approach because it doesn't want to back the council into a corner.

"Let them do with it what they will," Leopoldus said.

In a carefully worded statement on Amendment 2, the commissioners said that because it is their responsibility to "work to discourage and prevent prejudicial discrimination or unfair treatment against any group," they were opposed to the statewide measure.

"The amendment would invalidate any present local legislation and prohibit any future legislation which sought to

See **AMENDMENT 2**/B4



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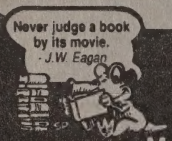

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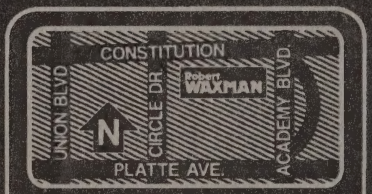

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Amendment 2/Council unlikely to echo sentiment

From B1

provide 'protected class' status or 'claim of discrimination' to individuals based on homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual orientation," the statement said.

Leopoldus will forward the commission's report to the City Council today.

The commission members have every right to take a position on Amendment 2 — pro or con — as long as they realize they're not speaking for the City Council, said Councilwoman Mary Lou Makepeace.

Although the commission's position against Amendment 2 would carry more weight if the council publicly agreed with it, she doesn't see that happening, especially since the council represents a diverse community.

"Matters are just extremely controversial and to think that we're going to have much agreement is pretty speculative," Makepeace said.

> "Personally, the voters don't need us to tell them how to vote."
>
> **Councilwoman Lisa Are**

It would be inappropriate to ask the City Council to take a position on Amendment 2 because it is a voter issue, said Councilwoman Lisa Are.

"I'm not even taking a position as a city official," Are said. "Personally, the voters don't need us to tell them how to vote."

Amy Stephens, the only commissioner who consistently has disagreed with the commission's stand against Amendment 2, wasn't at the meeting.

Stephens, an employee of Focus on the Family, a conservative religious group that has voiced opposition to extending civil rights protection to homosexuals, said she had to miss the meeting because she was home with a sick child.

"I probably would've been the opposing vote, but I don't think I'm out of step, frankly," Stephens said after the meeting. "The majority of this community came out against the ordinance last year that included sexual orientation. I would not necessarily say they (the commission) are in touch with the community."

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Carson were involved in a slapping
another Fort Carson soldier.

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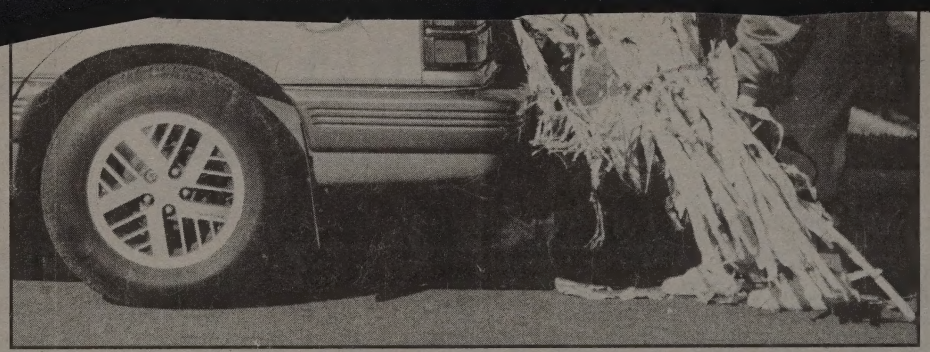

will be used as autumn decorations. Shoppers will have one more day to pick through the year's harvest on Saturday, when some of the farmers make an appearance at Bancroft Park in Old Colorado City.

Parents recognized for efforts to get school crossing guards

Couple's son was killed by car in '89

worried about how the program would be funded. Even some members of the community